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ABSTRACT

This summary of the final report of a statewide study of library systems in New York State begins by providing background information on the library systems and changes that have occurred since the last system study was conducted in 1967. The methodology of the current study is then described, and the mission and services of library systems identified by the study are discussed under five headings: (1) Enhancement of Library Services; (2) Performance of Library Operational Functions; (3) Direct Services to Users; (4) Support of Library Development; and (5) Enhancement of Cooperation and Communications. Basic library system services are outlined for public library systems (PLS), reference and research library resources systems (RRLRS), and school library systems (SLS). Findings on intersystem relationships and cooperation are also reported, as well as the governance of library systems, library system funding, and state-level responsibility. The major conclusions of the study are presented under the headings of the Role of Library Systems in New York State, Performance of Library Systems, Economies of Scale of Library Systems, Gaps in Services and Funding, Balancing Local Autonomy and Accountability, and The Need for Continued Cooperation. The report concludes by listing the study's major recommendations in the areas of library system services, structure and intersystem relationships, governance, funding, measurement, and state-level responsibility. (SD)

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Library Systems in New York State

1989

Summary

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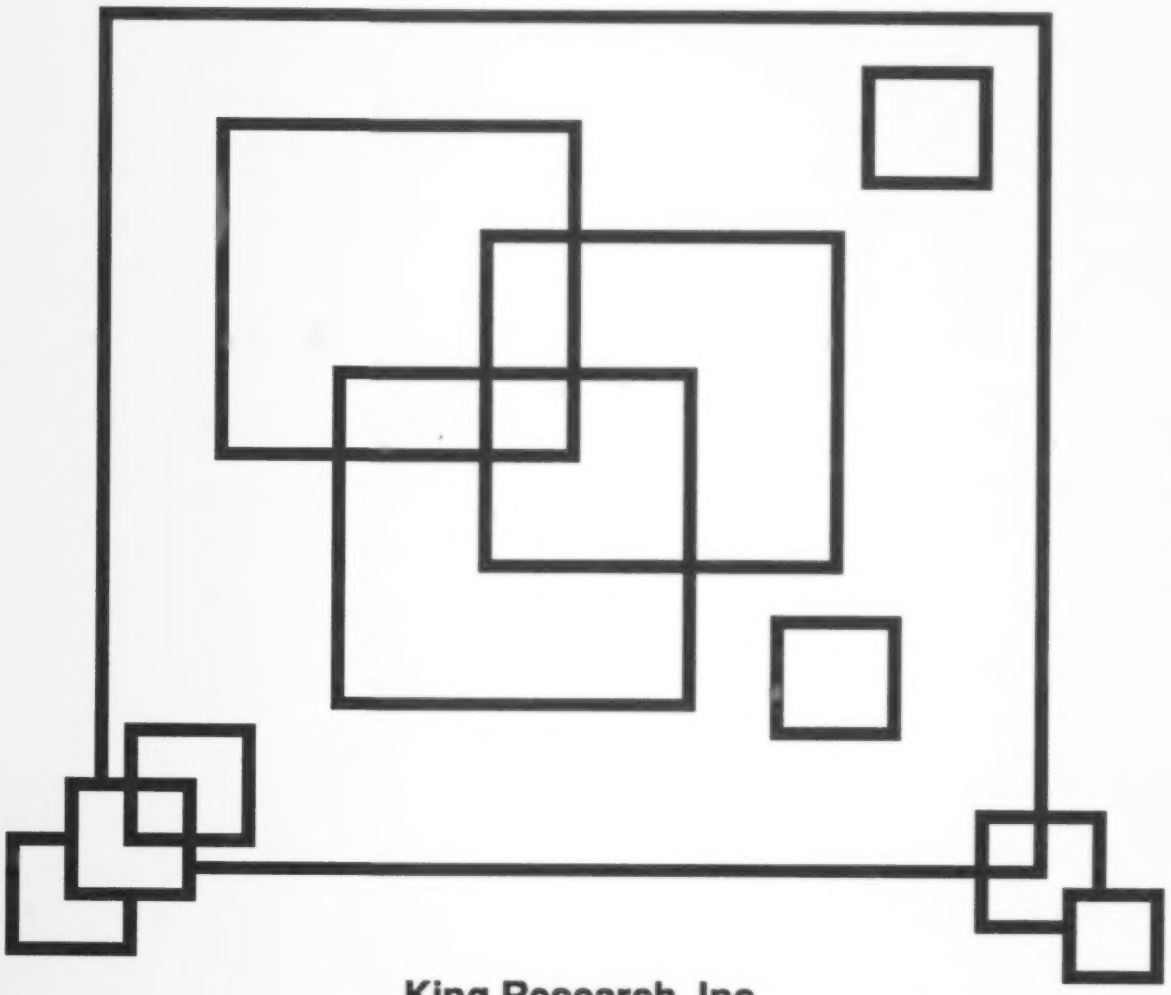

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LIBRARY SYSTEMS IN NEW YORK STATE

APRIL, 1989

A Study Prepared for:

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Division of Library Development

Report Authored by:

Jose-Marie Griffiths, Ph.D.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study reflects extensive interest and contributions by the library community in New York State. We would like to thank all of the persons who completed questionnaires, attended open meetings at Library Systems and regional meetings, and who wrote to us with suggestions and constructive criticism. We also particularly wish to acknowledge the efforts of Library System directors and their staff and Central Library personnel for providing information, input and output data, and many useful suggestions and insights.

The Division of Library Development (DLD) staff have all been extremely helpful and forthcoming with information and data. Mr. Joseph F. Shubert and Ms. Roberta G. Cade were particularly supportive without attempting to influence or guide our results. Ms. Judith L. Levine served as DLD Project Administrator. The success of this project is due in large part to her ability to understand what we were trying to accomplish on the project. She showed unusual insights and thoughtfulness. She also had a knack for knowing when to stress schedule and budget and when to let us think through the complexities of the study when that required extra time.

Staff at King Research included Mr. Laurence W. Lannom who performed all of the computer data processing. He was able to perform the difficult task of developing a unified database from several survey instruments and he produced most of the statistical data. Other KRI staff included Jean Bull, Sandi Gosbee, Jill Riedel, Dina Shah and others. We also want to thank Sandra M. Cooper of The Consulting Librarians Group, who served as a consultant on the project. She conducted in-depth interviews and held open meetings for over one-half of the School Library Systems. We received nothing but praise for the way in which she conducted this difficult work. She made many helpful suggestions to the project.

The project was supported by a Systems Study Advisory Committee which was Chaired by Dr. Robert Wedgeworth, Dean, School of Library Service, Columbia University. He was extremely effective in his leadership and guidance throughout the project. The Committee, which was formed prior to the award of the contract, was instrumental in formulating project objectives and actual specifications for the Request for Proposal. The

eight official committee meetings held with King Research were all well-attended and spirited. Deputy Commissioner for Cultural Education Carole F. Huxley attended several of the official committee meetings with King Research and was deeply involved in the early processes, before a contract was awarded. The advice given during these meetings and through other forms of communication was always very useful. The members of the Advisory Committee are listed on the next page.

In order to produce a report of the scope, complexity and importance of the Library Systems Study a large number of people must be willing to participate and contribute. We thank all of you even though literally hundreds cannot be acknowledged by name. The Report reflects an incredible amount of energy and thought of these hundreds that cannot be easily expressed in a few words or pages in this report. We have tried to describe, summarize and analyze a very complex environment. We have also attempted to convey a quantitative perspective on this environment that can be used now and for a long time in the future in making statewide funding decisions; in developing system structure, governance and intersystem relationships; in managing Library Systems; and in accountability of these Systems. We hope the readers of this Report will give it the same attention and thought that the providers of the data, information and suggestions have.

Jose-Marie Griffiths, Ph.D.
Donald W. King

SYSTEMS STUDY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Robert Wedgeworth	Dean, School of Library Service, Columbia University, Chair
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Corinne Wightman	Director, Oneida BOCES School Library System, New Hartford
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THE AUTHORS

JOSE-MARIE GRIFFITHS, PROJECT DIRECTOR

Dr. Griffiths has directed statewide library networking and cooperative planning studies in 12 states, 14 regions, and 31 localities. She has particular expertise in computer and telecommunications technology and has conducted a number of basic and applied research projects concerning these technologies for the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy and others. She and Mr. King have developed economic models of the cost, performance, effectiveness and value of information systems and services. They recently completed a Manual on Performance Indicators for Public Libraries (in the UK). Dr. Griffiths also directed a large project to develop competencies of information professionals (including librarians) for establishing new directions in library and information science education. Prior to joining King Research in 1980 she served as a consultant in the UK for five years; Head of the Education and Training Centre, Marconi Avionics; and Director of the Computing Laboratory, Imperial Cancer Research Fund Laboratories. She received her Ph.D. in Information Science from University College, London University in 1977 and has taught at several universities (including Visiting Professor at University of California at Berkeley and The Queen's University, Belfast). She is extensively published with two books (three in process) and over 100 other formal publications. She is frequently asked to present keynote addresses and has given invited workshops throughout the world (14 countries). She is the recipient of a number of awards in the UK and was OCLC Distinguished Lecturer in 1986.

DONALD W. KING, DEPUTY PROJECT DIRECTOR

Mr. King has pioneered in developing evaluation methods, measures, and models, and has conducted landmark studies which have helped the information community by describing and interpreting information systems and environments. He co-founded a survey research firm in 1961 (now believed to be the largest in the world) and founded King Research, Inc. in 1976. He has spent all but two years of his career in these two companies.

He has particular expertise in statistics, survey research and economics. He earned an M.S. degree in statistics from the University of Wyoming in 1960. He has authored or edited nine books (three in process) and has over 200 other formal publications. He has received many honors and awards including: Award-of-Merit, American Society for Information Science (1987); the Distinguished Alumnus of the College of Commerce and Industry, University of Wyoming (1984); elected Fellow of the American Statistical Association (1983); Stallman Lecturer, University of Texas (1983); Miles Conrad Annual Award and Memorial Lecturer, NFAIS (1980); Distinguished Lecturer, National Bureau of Standards (1978). He has held elected offices in ASIS (President) and ASA (Governor of District 1) and has served on a number of Boards of Directors and Advisory Committees for universities, government agencies, and information companies and publishers.

Columbia University in the City of New York | *New York, N.Y. 10027*

SCHOOL OF LIBRARY SERVICE
Office of the Dean

516 Butler Library
212/280-2292

April 19, 1989

Joseph F. Shubert
State Librarian
New York State Library
Cultural Education Center
Albany, New York 12230

Dear Joe:

On behalf of the New York State Library Systems Study Advisory Committee established by the Regents for this purpose, it is my pleasure to transmit to you the final report, "Study of Library Systems in New York State", representing research performed by King Research, Inc. with our recommendations that it be accepted by the Division of Library Development as having fulfilled the general terms and conditions under which the study was authorized.

The Advisory Committee is satisfied that the integrity of the process for accomplishing this work merits the confidence of the State Regents, the Division of Library Development, the library systems and libraries of New York State and indeed citizens who support and receive benefits from the State's libraries of all types.

Working with the Division of Library Development, the Advisory Committee helped to define the essential questions to be answered by the first comprehensive state-wide study of library systems since 1966. Based on those questions a request for proposals was issued by DLD which attracted several responses. Again working with DLD the Advisory Committee assisted in the selection of King Research, Inc. as the best qualified applicant to perform the study proposed.

During the course of the study the Advisory Committee met with representatives of KRI on numerous occasions to advise on the structure, data collection and relations with the library community for which the study has great significance. In all, the 20 member Advisory Committee representing all types of libraries met at least 9 times and held several public meetings inviting comments on the study and its preliminary findings.

It should be emphasized that this is not a study of New York libraries but New York library systems. Therefore, the principal significance of the study is the information it presents to the library systems about their activities which will be useful for self-evaluation. Several major findings and recommendations are provided in the report.

Library systems in New York State should be autonomous, yet flexible enough to accomodate local needs. But at the same time they must be accountable to their user publics.

The study focuses on the need for systems to maintain broadly democratic decision-making processes that involve both lay board members and library professionals.

KRI has contributed the concept of "economies of scale" and suggests cross system contracting for services when economic or other factors show the need for such arrangements. These data will help library systems to be more cost effective and thereby allow the State to achieve greater leverage of its State Aid through funding library systems.

KRI also provides the statistical data, findings and recommendations for an approach to addressing the many issues that face library systems in New York State. In presenting these data the study poses a strong argument for the development of a core set of statistical data that should be maintained for all systems in order to provide the basis for ongoing local evaluation and lay the basis for the next state-wide study.

The Advisory Committee realizes that change is needed and desirable if we wish to exploit opportunities for future development in New York State. However, it will be a challenge to DLD and the library community to work together to exploit these opportunities.

The Advisory Committee recognizes that there is intense interest on the part of the New York State library community in the findings and recommendations of this study. Therefore we urge that it be released for distribution as soon as possible in order to stimulate discussion and further considerations that will be important for setting future directions for library systems in the State of New York.

The Advisory Committee is grateful for the opportunity to serve the Regents, the Division of Library Development and the State and wish to express our deepest appreciation for the support and encouragement of the Committee's work by you, Roberta Cade and especially Judith Levine, the Staff Coordinator for the Study.

Sincerely,

Bob Wedgeworth

Robert Wedgeworth
Dean

/dmr

STUDY OF
LIBRARY SYSTEMS IN NEW YORK STATE

SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND

Library Systems have been an integral part of library service to the citizens of New York State since 1950 when the establishment of Public Library Systems was authorized by Education Law. By 1961 all counties in the State were included in Public Library Systems. In addition to providing services, Public Library Systems are served by one or two Central Libraries which function as the "resource" library for the Public Library System. Central Libraries receive Central Book Aid to develop and add to their collections of adult non-fiction or foreign language materials and Central Library Development Aid which may be used for developing Central Library services. In 1978 Reference and Research Library Resources Systems (RRLRS) were authorized by Education Law, although chartering took place between 1964 and 1967. The RRLRS have a broad mission including providing services to the research community and hospital libraries, supporting higher education, and so on. The RRLRS also serve as agents for coordination of the regional bibliographic database and interlibrary resource sharing grants. A third kind of Library System was authorized in 1984 to serve school libraries, following a pilot test of 12 School Library Systems. The Law specifies a wide range of services to be provided by School Library Systems to school libraries.

Currently 22 Public Library Systems serve 734 public libraries in the State (all but 3 small chartered public libraries). The Reference and Research Library Resources Systems cover nine regions and serve a total of about 750 libraries in public and private colleges and universities, research libraries, and special libraries. They also serve Public Library and School Library Systems, enabling libraries of all types to share resources. A total of 46 School Library Systems serve a total of 3,207 public and non-public schools (at the school building level).

BACKGROUND (cont.)

It has been over 20 years since the last comprehensive Statewide evaluation was done in New York State. The resulting report, Emerging Library Systems, described the progress that had been made up to that time (1967) by Public Library Systems, and 19 areas of need for improvement of the Systems were identified.

Since the last System study was performed, a number of changes have occurred:

- new technology in the library field has made remarkable advances,
- composition of the population in the State is changing in terms of age, national origin, education level, primary language, etc., thereby significantly affecting the information needs and requirements of citizens,
- users of libraries are becoming much more sophisticated in their information-seeking behavior as well as their information needs and requirements,
- Library Systems are now serving the academic, research and special library communities and school libraries, in addition to public libraries,
- many new services have been added to the menu of Library System services provided to libraries in the State,
- new types of Library Systems, experiments into new services and types of libraries served, as well as competition for funds, have created a number of conflicts, "turf battles" and disagreements,
- in some instances the State Legislature has assigned new responsibilities to Library Systems without changing the basic Law defining the Systems and their objectives,
- public expectations for accountability are now higher for most public services, including Library Systems, and
- the economies of library service provision and use have reflected the changes above.

For these reasons, it was considered necessary to re-examine Library Systems in New York State and to:

- describe and analyze the way New York's Library Systems are actually working today,
- compare that to the intent of library laws and regulations and to the needs for library services which consequently affect all State residents, and
- recommend changes and justify such recommendations where changing conditions indicate the need for them.

In particular, five components were specified to be studied:

- **Mission and services**
- **Governance**
- **Intersystem relationships and cooperation**
- **Funding**
- **Measurement.**

We have made a number of recommendations concerning each of the five components above and for State-level responsibility. The recommendations are addressed to several groups of participants in the library community in New York State including:

- New York State Legislators who formulate laws and who establish funding levels for Library Systems
- Regents of the University of the State of New York
- The State Education Department (SED)
- Division of Library Development staff
- Library System directors and staff
- Library System Board members
- Member libraries
- Citizens of New York State.

We believe that the value of the study extends beyond these recommendations to the development of a philosophical approach to examining Library Systems in New York State. Furthermore, we have provided extensive information and data which can be used by each group of participants above in their deliberations and in making decisions concerning Library Systems and their services in the future.

A complete list of recommendations is given at the end of this Summary. The list is subdivided into the five components above (and State level responsibility) and a code is attached to each recommendation for cross-referencing purposes. Some major recommendations are presented in the discussion below. The remaining recommendations are embedded in the study findings, conclusions and analysis parts of each of six major sections of the Report: Mission and Services, Structure and Intersystem Relationships, Governance, Funding, Measurement and State Level Responsibility. Another section in the Report (Section 2) deals with the study background, analysis methods and examples, and detailed data collection methods. Each section has a part devoted to an in-depth description of the current picture regarding the relevant component. Each section also has a part devoted to findings and conclusions and a part which discusses analysis. Finally, there is a lengthy Appendix C which provides detailed information and data concerning each Library System service. These sections and appendix provide a wealth of information and data that can be used not only to help form independent judgements concerning recommendations, but also as a reference tool that we designed to be used for a long time to come.

1.2 STUDY METHODS

Following extensive input by the Advisory Committee, study requirements and specifications were developed and a competitive contract was awarded to King Research, Inc. ($128,376). The study was performed through the following processes:

STUDY METHODS (cont.)

- Formal surveys were conducted with all 76 Library Systems (excluding Consolidated Systems*) and Central Libraries, and a sample of member libraries and non-member libraries.
- Interviews were performed with staff of 76 Library Systems, many Central Libraries and Consolidated Systems*.
- Secondary sources of data were analyzed to provide additional evidence. Sources included data supplied to DLD, DLD reports, studies done by King Research for the Federal government and other states, and studies done by others.
- Open meetings were held at Library Systems for Board members, member libraries, trustees, patrons, etc. A few times no one came, but more often 10 to 25 persons attended the meetings.
- Nine regional meetings were held to obtain feedback on a report, "Preliminary Study Findings and Recommendations," that was widely distributed prior to the meetings. These meetings were attended by over 400 persons and we received well over 100 written responses.
- Two workshops were held by King Research to discuss the Library System questionnaire; particularly the cost and quantity sections.
- Meetings were held with various Library System and library directors associations and at NYLA.
- Eight meetings were held with the Study Advisory Committee and meetings were held with ad hoc committees.
- All major DLD staff were interviewed at length at least once.

Thus, the study involved extensive data collection and analysis as well as ample opportunities for everyone in the State to express their concerns, provide suggestions and discuss the project.

The study, in particular, emphasized data gathered and analyzed using statistical methods. The unique aspect of data collection was that information was obtained about each of the 117 services provided by Library Systems including:

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* The New York Public Library, Queens Borough Public Library and Brooklyn Public Library.

STUDY METHODS (cont.)

- cost, amount of service provided, average cost per unit (Library System and Central Library survey) and
- amount of service received, importance of service, and satisfaction with service provision from each type of System and other providers (member library survey).

These data serve several purposes:

- They provide (1) evidence concerning economies of scale (or return on investment made by the State) achieved by Library Systems, (2) indications of how well Library Systems are performing, (3) data for assessing factors that affect cost, and (4) a means to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Library Systems.
- The data provide Library System directors and Board members with hard evidence concerning the performance of their Systems compared with others.
- The data and methods establish a mechanism for achieving Library System accountability to member libraries and to the State.
- The data provide a basis for decisions on using alternative sources for services, combining resources and/or services among Library Systems, employing new resources such as new technology, revising funding formulas, and so on.

The data are found throughout the report and Appendix C summarizes data by specific service and by type of Library System. For example, average costs and quantities, quartiles of average costs, average satisfaction and importance levels, quartiles of average satisfaction and levels of economies of scale are provided for each Library System to compare their performance with other Systems.

1.3 LIBRARY SYSTEM MISSION AND SERVICES

During the course of the study we identified 117 individual types of services provided by Library Systems in New York State (a comprehensive list of services can be found in Appendix G). These services support libraries and citizens in five ways: enhancement of library services, performance of library operational functions, direct services to users, support of library development, and enhancement of cooperation and communication.

Enhancement of Library Services

Many of the Library System services enhance or complement services that are provided by libraries to their patrons. Such support to libraries is provided for (1) interlibrary lending and borrowing (request processing, verification and location, and fulfillment), (2) interlibrary loan support mechanisms (union list production, retrospective conversion and delivery), (3) access to other shared collections (rotating and pool collections and bookmobiles), and (4) reference, referral and research (manual and online searching of bibliographic and other databases).

These services are said to be very important to libraries of all types and are provided by nearly all Library Systems (the exception being that only PLS provide access to other shared collections). Member libraries can and do provide these services. However, many libraries rely on Library Systems to assist them when requests or patron needs are beyond the libraries' expertise or capabilities. This makes a great deal of sense from both a cost and quality standpoint. The total estimated costs of providing these services is $15.2 million or one-third of all Library Systems' costs of services. These services also account for a large portion of the costs of each type of Library System as well (PLS - 29%; RRLRS - 54%; SLS - 41%). Services in which importance is very high, but satisfaction is rated relatively low include union list/catalog production for PLS; bibliographic verification and location for RRLRS; and online bibliographic searching and union list/catalog production for SLS.

Most of the so-called multitype Library System activities in the State involve interlibrary loan-related services and, as a result, many people tend to think that multitype activity dominates Library System services. Yet considering costs of all services, less than ten percent of all RRLRS costs involve direct ILL-related services to public or school libraries and less than one percent of all PLS and SLS costs involve direct services to other types of libraries.

Performance of Library Operational Functions

In some instances Library Systems act as a centralized facility to perform operational functions normally done in-house by libraries. That is, Library Systems replace the need for libraries to perform the operational functions themselves. Such operational functions range from acquisitions and cataloging to recordkeeping and public relations. These services are provided by Library Systems because centralization can achieve substantial economies, particularly to small libraries.

The total estimated cost for these services is $11.4 million, which is one-fourth of all the Library Systems' costs. Most of these services are furnished by PLS to public libraries. Ninety-two percent of all costs incurred for performing operational functions by all three types of Systems are incurred by PLS (6.7% of these costs are by RRLRS and only 0.9% by SLS).

Funding of PLS to provide these services is well justified because public libraries are publicly funded anyway and the State can achieve financial leverage by funding in this way rather than funding libraries directly. In fact, study results provide evidence that it would cost public libraries several times what it costs Public Library Systems to provide this type of service. About 30 percent of all PLS costs are for this type of service. It is for these reasons that nearly all of the PLS provide these services (exceptions are conservation and preservation services and public relations through radio and television). Generally, public relations are not considered important by PLS member libraries. Over one-half of the RRLRS report that they provide collection development (not considered important or satisfactory), acquisitions and ordering (very important, but not satisfactory), cataloging and catalog production (both important and very satisfactory) and some public relations (neither important nor satisfactory). Most SLS only report doing materials examination (very important and satisfactory) and some public relations. Thus, there is evidence that some of these services should be carefully examined by Library Systems and improved or, perhaps, dropped.

We spent some time considering whether RRLRS and SLS should be more active in performing library operational functions. (About 14% of all RRLRS costs and 2% of all SLS costs relate to these services). We believe that privately funded libraries (e.g., corporate libraries, private universities, etc.) should not have their internal library operations supported by public funds (any more than any other function performed in the company or university). Yet by not being offered these services, small academic, research and special libraries, they cannot receive the potential cost savings achievable through centralized services. They could be achieved if RRLRS were to provide or arrange these services for a fee equal to cost. In this way, the libraries can receive services at substantially lower costs than performing the work themselves and at no additional burden to the taxpayers. Thus, we recommend that **operational services to libraries that are part of for-profit organizations (e.g., company libraries) should be provided for a fee equal to cost (F9).** We believe that the State and local school districts can also gain the benefits of economies of scale by having School Library Systems provide or arrange for performance of library operational services (see Section 1.6 below).

Direct Services to Users

Public Library Systems provide some services directly to citizens including outreach to nursing homes, institutions and others; books by mail (and bookmobiles) for remote or hard-to-reach patrons; employment information for job seekers; and so on. Many public libraries cannot afford such services and/or do not cover areas or populations which need services. They often cannot provide these services as inexpensively as can Public Library Systems because of economies of scale. Finally, some citizens that are outside of any public library chartered area are served by PLS, thus filling gaps in services. The total estimated costs are $4.3 million. Most PLS provide these services, which account for about 12 percent of all PLS costs.

Support of Library Development

Library Systems also support member library development through such services as consultant services (e.g., automation, young adult, audiovisual, etc.), grant preparation and administration, continuing education for staff (e.g., workshops, professional collections, etc.). These are useful to member libraries because they provide support that might not otherwise be available and they end up improving library operations and services. The member libraries consider these services to be important, although continuing education less than the other two. Most Library Systems provide these services, except SLS do not provide grant preparation and administration. The total cost of these services is estimated to be $3.1 million (i.e., 12% of all costs). These services account for a larger proportion of SLS budgets (19%) than the other two types of Library Systems (PLS - 11%; RRLRS - 16%). Satisfaction ratings for these services are generally high, although consultant services provided by PLS are rated low.

Enhancement of Cooperation and Communications

These services include services for enhancement of interlibrary cooperation (e.g., cooperative collection development, direct access to member collections and communication by electronic mail, teleconferencing, etc.) which involve about seven percent of all costs. A large portion of SLS costs are for communications (17%). Most Library Systems are involved in these services (except few RRLRS report direct access to member collections and less than one-half of PLS perform cooperative collection development as such). They also include member library participation (i.e., directors' or librarians' councils, committees representing member libraries, liaison groups, ad hoc questionnaires, etc.) which account for about four percent of all service costs.

These are necessary and useful services to member libraries, although we find it more difficult to demonstrate economies or direct benefits. Cooperative collection development and communications were both

rated low in importance and satisfaction by PLS member libraries and RRLRS members rated cooperative collection development low in importance and satisfaction. Consequently, these services should be examined by PLS and particularly RRLRS, since they have been given special responsibilities for these services.

Basic Library System Services

We examined services to decide which should be basic or core Library System services (i.e., which services should be provided by each type of Library System). The selection of basic services was based on the following four criteria:

- Amount of use and importance of service to member libraries.
- Extent of economies of scale achieved by centralizing services.
- Availability of and potential for continued availability of services from alternative sources (e.g., bibliographic utilities, vendors, suppliers, etc.)
- Whether the member libraries are publicly funded institutions.

With these criteria in mind we arrive at the following basic services (with appropriate service codes):

Public Library Systems (PLS)

- ILL request processing (1.1)
- Verifying and locating materials (3)
- Interlibrary loan of materials (2.1, 2.2)
- Reference and referral (4.12.1 - 4.12.4)
- Retrospective conversion (4.7)
- Union list/catalog production (4.9)
- Delivery (4.14.2)
- Circulation control (4.1)
- Acquisitions and ordering (4.4)
- Cataloging (4.6)

LIBRARY SYSTEM MISSION AND SERVICES (cont.)

Public Library Systems (PLS) (cont.)

- Catalog production (4.8)
- Physical processing (4.10)
- Outreach services (6.1 - 6.12)
- Consultant services (4.16.1 - 4.16.7)
- Grant preparation and administration (10.1 - 10.7)
- Continuing education (5.1 - 5.3)
- Communication services (7.1)
- Direct access to member collections (12.1 - 12.4)
- Computer facilities (8)

Reference and Research Library Resources Systems (RRLRS)

- ILL request processing (1.1)
- Verifying and locating materials (3)
- Reference, referral and research (4.12.1 - 4.12.5)
- Retrospective conversion (4.7)
- Union list/catalog production (4.9)
- Delivery (4.14.2)
- Consultant services (4.16.7 - 4.16.13)
- Continuing education (5.1 - 5.3)
- Communication services (7.1)
- Direct access to member collections (12.1 - 12.4)

School Library Systems (SLS)

- ILL request processing (1.1)
- Verifying and locating materials (3)
- Interlibrary loan of materials (2.1, 2.2)
- Reference and referral (4.12.1 - 4.12.4)
- Retrospective conversion (4.7)
- Union list/catalog production (4.9)
- Delivery (4.14.4, 4.14.5)

LIBRARY SYSTEM MISSION AND SERVICES (cont.)

School Library Systems (SLS) (cont.)

- Consultant services (4.16.7, 4.16.10 - 4.16.12)
- Continuing education (5.1 - 5.4)
- Communication services (7.1)
- Cooperative collection development (4.3)
- Direct access to member collections (12.1 - 12.4)

We believe that School Library Systems should be providing (or arranging) many of the library operational functions now being performed for public libraries by PLS (including computer facilities). However, further evidence needs to be gathered to determine which of these services should be provided, how much and how they should be funded (see Section 1.6).

Presenting these suggested basic services does not imply that other services should not be provided, but that the basic services should be emphasized, and, at minimum, provided by the appropriate Library System to their members.

1.4 INTERSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS AND COOPERATION

One of the most difficult and controversial aspects of the study concerns the structure of Library Systems in New York State. In particular we addressed the questions of:

- What types of Library Systems should there be?
- How many Library Systems should there be?
- Whom should the Library Systems serve?

In order to answer these questions we kept four basic criteria in mind:

- Optimum service performance (e.g., productivity, quality, timeliness, etc.) should be guaranteed.
- Economies of scale should be achieved.

- Coordination and cooperation among types of libraries should be enhanced.
- The structure must be workable, both operationally and politically.

The most complicating factor regarding the three basic questions above is that there are over 100 services currently being provided by Library Systems in New York State. One could conceivably have over 100 "ideal" Library System structures: one for each service. To overcome this complication we tried to arrive at a structure which accommodates most of the services, at least most of the basic services. We recognize that there must be exceptions and, therefore, recommend that **Laws and regulations governing Library Systems should be flexible enough to recognize and accommodate appropriate service configuration, resources and other differences among Systems (ST3).** With this caveat and recommendation in mind we provide the following solutions to the questions above.

There are basically three dimensions to the structure of Library Systems:

- **type of services provided such as interlibrary loan processing; reference, referral and research services; operational support services such as acquisitions, cataloging, etc.; and so on;**
- **type of library served such as public, academic, research, special, school, institutional, and so on; and**
- **geographic area served such as local (e.g., county), regional and state-wide.**

We examined an array of combinations of these three dimensions to arrive at our judgement of the best type of System structure to have in the State.

Currently the Library System structure is that:

- Public Library Systems (PLS) provide nearly all System services used by public libraries. PLS serve one or more counties.

INTERSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS AND COOPERATION (cont.)

- Reference and Research Library Resources Systems (RRLRS) provide nearly all System services used by academic, research and special libraries, a few public libraries and Public and School Library Systems within nine designated geographic regions.

- School Library Systems (SLS) provide nearly all System services used by school libraries within Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) or Big City School District geographic boundaries.

We examined the possibility of structuring the Library Systems by a total multitype structure in which each System would serve all types of libraries for certain services and/or specified geographic areas. In such a structure there would be about 20 to 30 "local" multitype Library Systems which would provide a broad range of services, but not all of them. Some services such as coordination of retrospective conversion, union list/catalog production and interlibrary loan protocols, etc.; some consulting; and some continuing education would be done at a broader, regional level. All SLS services would be folded into current PLS and/or RRLRS, and regional services would be done by a "designated" local multitype system.

While such a structure is appealing in many ways, we believe that a total multitype system does not meet the four criteria mentioned above as well as a more library-type specific structure does. Generally, each type of library has very specific information needs and requirements that are best met by a Library System that has developed special expertise and competencies (i.e., knowledge and skills) to meet these needs and requirements. Needs and requirements for cataloging, retrospective conversion, acquisitions, reference, referral and research, as a few examples, are quite unique for different types of libraries. Thus, System performance is enhanced by focusing services on the specific needs and requirements of the different types of libraries.

Generally, member libraries consider the services provided by the current three types of Systems to be very important to them. The user libraries are also basically satisfied with the performance of services.

Furthermore, even if the structure changed to total multitype, we do not foresee the likelihood that the current predominance of library-type service provision will change. That is, there is little evidence in New York State or elsewhere that the amount of interlibrary lending will not continue to be dominated by transactions within common types of libraries (i.e., public to public, school to school, etc.). The same holds true for reference, referral and research services as well as for most other services. Finally, Library Systems provide very important services to each type of library in the State and service to one type should not overshadow services to the other types. For these reasons we recommend that **there should be three types of Library Systems:**

- **Public Library Systems (PLS) serving public libraries**
- **Reference and Research Library Resources Systems (RRLRS) serving academic, research and special libraries**
- **School Library Systems (SLS) serving school libraries. (ST1)**

Some libraries, such as those found in correctional institutions, do not fit well into the three types of Library Systems. A determination of which System should serve these libraries (or of which System they should be a member) should be based on their patron needs and requirements and the types of materials, services and supporting expertise required.

We emphasize that not all Library Systems are achieving desirable levels of economies of scale for some services. We have tried to provide guidance and data for Library Systems to examine their services and decide whether or not they are operating at a sufficient level of volume (for economies of scale) or performing with adequate efficiency. If they are not, they should seek alternative methods for providing services to their members. Thus, we recommend that **Library Systems should provide their members with access to the most cost-effective services possible, by either acting as service providers or by arranging or contracting with other providers as appropriate (ST4).** Other appropriate providers could be other Library Systems (like-type or otherwise), libraries, vendors, and so on. Library Systems have already begun to make such arrangements, but clearly should do more of this in the future.

INTERSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS AND COOPERATION (cont.)

There are clear benefits to be obtained by libraries sharing their resources beyond their own type of library, including collections, equipment and systems, staff with special competencies, facilities, etc. In order to receive these benefits, it is important that coordination and cooperation among libraries (and types of libraries) be enhanced. We have recommended a mechanism for coordination and cooperation through broad representation of all types of libraries. Furthermore, we highly recommend and stress throughout the report the necessity for making formal arrangements (and even contracts) for having the strongest Library System or other organization in an area or region provide services, even across different types of libraries, when this is the most cost-effective means of doing so. In this way we believe the advantages of both multitype and library-specific type of Systems can be achieved.

Part of the ability of Library Systems to serve their member libraries well stems from cooperative efforts among libraries. In particular, access to collections and other materials, reference, referral and research services, and other shared resources are enhanced by Library System efforts. Such sharing of resources is likely to increase to some degree in the future. Furthermore, Library Systems are able to provide consultation, continuing education and other services to libraries of all types. We strongly endorse such cooperative efforts among the different types of libraries and Library Systems.

Currently, coordination and cooperation across library types is largely being done through RRLRS and their Boards in most regions. The RRLRS Boards mostly consist of academic librarians, special librarians, PLS (and some SLS) directors and lay persons. We believe that such representation is not broad enough for coordination and cooperation among all the diverse types of libraries in the State. Some services require direct cooperation among libraries of various types (e.g., library-to-library interlibrary lending) and libraries of all types are recipients of mutlitype library services provided by Library Systems. Thus, we contend that libraries of all types must participate in the formulation of cooperative efforts. Even though Library Systems coordinate and arrange

for cooperative efforts (in addition to providing multitype services), we believe they should not be the dominant type of participant in cooperative efforts. For these reasons, we recommend that **coordination of services and cooperation among types of Library Systems and their members should take place through Intersystem Cooperative Networks (ICONs) consisting of representatives of member libraries and Library Systems from each of the three types of Library Systems in each region. The ICONs should elect a Coordinating Agent every three years. The Coordinating Agent will be responsible for coordinating the development of a three-year cooperative service plan and administering cooperative programs and services (ST5).** We further recommend that **representation in Intersystem Cooperative Networks (ICON) should consist of at least one Library System director and one member library director from each type of Library System (G10).**

Each region varies in composition of number of Library Systems and member libraries. Thus, we think that each region should develop its own structure for representation in ICON. However, regardless of the composition of representatives in ICON, formal voting should be weighted such that each of the three types of Library Systems and each of the three types of member libraries be given equal votes.

One particular difficulty and source of antagonism in the past has been the assignment of responsibility to RRLRS for distributing regional automation funds. We recommend that this problem be addressed by not assigning responsibility to one Library System for determining how funds should be distributed among Library Systems. Rather, we recommend that **the responsibility of determining how funds for any program should be disbursed among Library Systems should not be given to any one Library System. Rather, the division of funds should be made on the basis of pre-determined formulas, or should be determined by New York State (F7).**

Another important issue in coordination deals with Central Libraries and their provision of Library System services. We present and discuss evidence concerning the extent of use of collections funded by Central Book Aid and interlibrary loan and reference services provided

through Central Library Development Aid. While the evidence is inconclusive because of the "softness" of these particular data collected from Central Libraries, we recommend that **interlibrary loan request processing and reference, referral and research services provided to public libraries and their patrons should be the responsibility of Public Library Systems. PLS should arrange with Central Libraries to provide these services, if cost effective to do so. Central Library directors should report to PLS directors regarding provision of these services (G9).** Contracts to provide these services should be made between Central Libraries and Public Library Systems. Central Libraries should be paid by PLS for all direct costs incurred, just as any other service provider. Thus, the Central Library director should report to the PLS director and provide annual statistics concerning quantities and costs of services provided to both "local" and "non-local" patrons in the same way any contractor would.

1.5 GOVERNANCE OF LIBRARY SYSTEMS

One area of weakness of Library Systems in New York State deals with accountability to member libraries and to the State. Relevant accountability at the local level places an extremely strong emphasis and responsibility on Library System Boards to ensure Library Systems are operating efficiently and cost-effectively. In order to enhance Board participation and achieve local accountability we recommend that **member library directors should be allowed to serve on Library System Boards. Boards should also include lay persons. Persons with special expertise such as finance, law, etc. should be sought to serve in addition to member library directors, patrons, and library trustees (G1)** and that **members of Library System Boards/Councils should be trained to understand economic issues and statistical methods concerning Library System operations and services (G2).**

GOVERNANCE OF LIBRARY SYSTEMS (CONT.)

School Library Systems have a particularly difficult situation in that they report to (1) BOCES or Big City School Districts (BCSD), (2) their Councils, (3) Bureau of School Library Media Programs and (4) Division of Library Development (the latter two in the State Education Department). SLS directors are ambivalent about their relationship with BOCES (and BCSD) because they receive many useful services (e.g., delivery, facilities, reproduction, etc.) and benefits, but they are often treated poorly in this environment in terms of their subordinate role. On balance we recommend that **SLS should remain within BOCES and Big City School Districts. The Law should specify that there is a special relationship between SLS and BOCES (G5).** The Library System directors should not be considered merely other BOCES employees. Rather, the SLS directors should at minimum be given authority and responsibility for budgets and be able to fully respond to needs and requirements of their members (and Councils).

1.6 LIBRARY SYSTEM FUNDING

A few participants suggested in open meetings and surveys that the State distribute funds directly to member libraries, to either use as they see fit or to pay Library Systems for services they want. We believe that such a policy would not provide the best overall services to citizens in the State. The advantage of having Library Systems provide these services is the economy of scale that can be achieved, particularly for small libraries. Economies of scale mean that services are provided more economically as the volume of service increases. We found in the study that economies of scale do in fact exist for most services. However, there is a point in volume (or size) above which the cost per unit of service provided decreases very little. We refer to that point as the "critical mass." It is generally desirable for Library Systems to operate at or above the critical mass although this may not always be possible. On the other hand, there is some evidence from the study of diseconomies of scale, in that if the Systems get very large, the average costs begin to rise slightly because of overhead and administrative costs.

If small libraries were given funds by the State to perform the services themselves it would cost the State at least 3.5 times more than it does by having the Systems provide the services. However, in order for Library Systems to accomplish these economies it is often necessary for them to serve large member libraries as well so that they reach the critical mass. (There are other advantages as well such as volume discounts.) One significant aspect of these arrangements is that the large member libraries could do the work nearly as inexpensively as the Library Systems, because they are also operating at or above the critical mass. Consequently, they must rely on the Library Systems to provide services with satisfactory performance (i.e., economically and with sufficient quality, timeliness, etc.), which is not always the case. Alternatively, they could function as the service providers.

There is ample evidence from the study that funding has not been adequate to meet all necessary services. Public Library Systems and RRLRS are not providing some services to all member libraries that could use them (e.g., to achieve economies of scale) and School Library Systems are not providing some services (that they should be providing) to any libraries. It is difficult to determine exactly how much additional funding would be required to provide all of the services that are necessary in the State. However, in our judgement we feel that SLS are the most underfunded type of Library System. SLS are not funded at a sufficient level to provide the services they are mandated to perform and they could perform many library operational functions for school libraries with the potential of substantial savings. Furthermore, underfunding of SLS is the most straight-forward to remedy. The PLS appear to be the next most underfunded and RRLRS least underfunded.

It would be relatively simple to determine the costs of current library operational functions in school libraries and then establish the savings that might be achieved by centralizing these services in SLS. Having the SLS in BOCES may facilitate such operational services since one of the objectives of BOCES as we understand them is to achieve economies of scale through cooperatively purchased materials and shared services. Since we did not obtain data on the extent of school library operational

functions we cannot determine how much can be saved by centralizing them. Some study should be initiated to determine this. Thus, we recommend that **the DLD and BSLMP should determine which school library functions can be performed less expensively by (or through) SLS. This should be done with a pilot test of one or more SLS. Furthermore, SLS should actively promote these services and seek ways of providing them through State Aid funds (F2).**

We believe that funding formulas should reflect the actual costs of services. We found four factors that appear to be particularly relevant to cost of services:

- size of population served (i.e., citizens, students, faculty, professionals, etc.),
- geographic area served,
- number of member libraries served, and
- size of member libraries.

Current funding formulas (using population and area) do not adequately represent the actual costs of services affected by population and area. Furthermore, the formulas do not include number of member libraries at all. Secondly, fixed amounts of aid allocated to each RRLRS and SLS appear to account for too high a proportion of funds. Finally, there is evidence that the average cost (per unit and per capita) of some PLS services is higher in lightly populated areas (e.g., under 300,000 persons) and lower in highly populated areas. We were unable to arrive at specific suggestions concerning funding formulas as part of the study. However, we recommend that **DLD should examine funding formulas to establish funding factors more clearly related to actual costs of services. This can be done if Library Systems provide cost and quantity data by service (F6).** Detailed data are provided in Appendix C for such an analysis. Average costs per unit can be related to levels of population (or geographic area or density) and average costs per capita can be related to levels of population to determine if a clear relationship exists for groups of services. If such relationships exist, the results could be used for funding formulas.

1.7 MEASUREMENT

The diversity of library communities served in the State suggests that type, level and amount of services should vary among communities. In order to best serve "local" communities, there are strong and compelling arguments that Library Systems should have the flexibility to choose which services to provide (beyond basic services), how much they should furnish and how they should be provided. To some considerable degree, Library Systems have been given a great deal of autonomy in their service provision. However, there has never been sufficient accountability to the State or to member libraries concerning local Library System decision-making. Furthermore, there have not been Statewide evaluations to determine whether or not Library Systems are providing cost-effective or high quality services. We believe that, if Library Systems are to be given substantial flexibility, they must also be able to demonstrate that they are serving member libraries well. While evidence from the study suggests that most member libraries are well served, there is also evidence of problems. It is not at all clear that Library System directors are aware of these problems, nor that they use existing management tools to detect, diagnose and resolve such problems.

In the course of the study we asked Library Systems to provide data on the quantities and costs of each service they provide. Few were able to do so without great difficulty, and some never did provide both types of data. These data are basic to operation and service decision-making. Furthermore, if because of economic conditions the State implements strict accountability measures, such data collection and reporting will become routine for monitoring purposes. We believe that with the tight economic climate in the State, such monitoring might well take place in the near future.

DLD and Library Systems have a unique opportunity in the current economic environment. First of all Library Systems services are among the few services provided under State funding that can clearly demonstrate actual savings. This study provides such evidence. The library community can show that State funding for these services yields tremendous leverage. Furthermore, such data should result in further substantial improvements in the cost-effectiveness of Library System operations and services.

MEASUREMENT (cont.)

The DLD has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in the State by taking the initiative in developing thorough accountability mechanisms while helping Library Systems add to their management tools. Also, by being so prepared, the DLD will avoid being told by State non-library budgeting staff what kinds of data need to be collected. Finally, New York State has been a pioneer among the states in its commitment to the Library System concept. This is an opportunity to do so again.

It will take a great deal of discipline by DLD, Library System directors and Board members, and member libraries to implement a useful and workable accountability mechanism and system of measures. We have made a number of recommendations for achieving this end, including implementing a system of measures that can be used at local and State levels. In this study we have attempted to demonstrate the kinds of data that are needed and methods for collecting them. We also showed a number of ways such data can be employed for rational economic decision-making at local levels as well as Statewide. There is every reason to believe that Library Systems and their members will benefit substantially from having this information.

1.8 STATE-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITY

There are some in the library community who have expressed concern with the ability of the Division of Library Development to carry out its leadership role. We believe that DLD does a good job with limited resources and staff in an environment where many do not want to be led. On the other hand there are some areas of potential improvement. For example, the DLD and the library community have not been as convincing and persuasive with Regents and the State Legislature as they might be. Library Systems have a powerful argument for their services, but it needs to be persuasively made. Thus, we recommend that **renewed effort should be made to educate SED, legislators, school administrators and faculty, and the non-school library community on the importance of libraries to lifelong learning in school settings, academic institutions, communities and work places (SL3)** and that **the DLD and library community should present the Regents and State Legislature with periodic evidence of savings achieved by Library Systems, that there are not better alternatives and that necessary gaps in services are being filled by them (SL4).**

STATE-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITY (CONT.)

There is indication that some Laws and Regulations are not fully carried out such as in updating plans of service, provision of free direct access to residents, PLS provision of union catalogs, and so on. Thus, we suggest that **the DLD should exert more control in ensuring that Laws and Regulations are fully implemented (SL8).**

The Library Systems need to be more accountable to the State regarding performance of their operations and services. Library Systems should annually provide data on cost and output quantities of services and they should report member library survey results every three years. We recommend that **DLD should develop standards for Library System performance in the next two years (SL9)** and **there should be more technical assistance, interaction, facilitation, leadership and guidance from DLD. This will facilitate establishing accountability of Library Systems (SL10).** However, in order to fully achieve the benefits of such reporting the **DLD should streamline and automate paperwork (SL11).** Finally, we strongly recommend that **DLD should budget and be funded for achieving recommended State-level responsibilities (SL13).**

1.9 MAJOR CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING LIBRARY SYSTEMS IN NEW YORK STATE

The Role of Library Systems in New York State

Library Systems have two particularly important roles to play in supporting library service in the State. First, they must provide (or arrange for) services which are better (e.g., in terms of quality and timeliness) and/or less expensive than any other alternative. Second, each Library System should identify gaps in service provision and then facilitate the development and provision of services in these areas.

There has been a long tradition of cooperation and resource sharing in the library community and New York State is widely recognized as having pioneered in this area. There are few institutions in Society that have shown the ingenuity and generosity in sharing their resources that libraries have. Library Systems in New York State have been the vehicle

through which libraries of all types and sizes can provide their patrons with services which would otherwise be far beyond their means.

This study clearly demonstrates that Library Systems provide services at a lesser cost than would be incurred by individual libraries, if they were required to provide the services themselves. We show in this study that, if there were no Library Systems in New York, it would cost member libraries at least 3.5 times more than it now costs to provide the services currently offered by the Library Systems in the State. Furthermore, many small libraries would not receive services and many library services simply would not be provided by some libraries at all. This study shows that Library Systems enable member libraries to provide more and/or better services to larger segments of their communities than otherwise possible, and to do so to at significantly lower costs; thus, making overall library service in the State much more cost-effective.

Performance of Library Systems

In this study we emphasize the need to build on the existing strengths of libraries and Library Systems to provide the most cost-effective services possible. This implies balancing the cost and the performance (e.g., productivity, quality, timeliness, etc.) of Systems. Indicators of performance were observed through a survey of member libraries. The survey determined member library satisfaction with the performance of services provided to them by Library Systems and others. The importance of services to member libraries was also observed. We estimated the amount of each service provided, the total cost of each service and, from these, the average cost (per transaction) of services.

There are many positive aspects to current service provision and resource sharing in New York State. However, there are serious problems with some Library Systems. For example, evidence from the study suggests that average costs of services are too high for:

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING LIBRARY SYSTEMS IN NEW YORK STATE (cont.)

- 2 of 16 PLS*
- 2 of 8 RRLRS*
- 6 of 39 SLS*

Average satisfaction ratings are too low (indicating negative perceptions of member libraries about quality, timeliness of services, etc.) for:

- 4 of 21 PLS
- 1 of 9 RRLRS
- 5 of 43 SLS**

Furthermore:

- many member libraries indicate that they are ignored by Library Systems in decision-making about services provided to them,
- many member libraries indicate a need for alternative services or services provided in a different way, and
- some duplication of services has occurred.

Study evidence and the resulting recommendations offer guidelines to further improve Library System performance and effectiveness. With help from the recommendations in this Report, Library Systems can take advantage of new kinds of information materials, technology, and management tools to provide the library services needed by a changing population in New York State.

Economies of Scale of Library Systems

As a result of economies of scale, Library Systems can perform work or provide services less expensively than most libraries can doing the work

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* Not all Library Systems reported both costs and output quantities.
** Three SLS were not represented by samples of member libraries due to non-response coupled with sparse sampling for individual SLS.

themselves. Such economies of scale are achieved because:

- high cost of some resources such as special collections, staff, systems, equipment, and facilities are shared among member libraries;
- some operations such as cataloging and interloan can be performed less expensively in large quantities than in small quantities;
- some staff competencies such as subject expertise in online searching; knowledge of outreach applications, library automation, library legislation, etc., can be used optimally across member libraries; and
- some products and services can be purchased less expensively because of volume discounts.

There are two implications of these economies of scale. The first is that Library Systems with low volumes of activity are often found to cost more than those with high volumes of activity. These Library Systems should seek to share resources across Systems, types of libraries or regions, as is currently done for some services. Second, the savings achieved by Library Systems are usually relatively greater for small member libraries than for large member libraries. Thus, the value of Library Systems is relatively higher for small libraries than for large libraries.

In order to obtain economies of scale some Library Systems must provide services to large member libraries even though the large libraries may be operating at a volume above the critical mass. In order for small libraries to gain substantial economic and other benefits, some large libraries must give up performing the work themselves in order to further the common good.

In some instances, the critical mass is not achieved by Library Systems in New York State because computer systems, printing equipment, collections and so on are not being used enough (let alone near their capacity). If Library Systems are not operating above the critical mass for some services, we suggest that they consider consolidating services with other Library Systems in their region (e.g., as is being done in

Metro) or even with a Library System in another region (e.g., as is being done with film collections with Public Library Systems across the South Central and Southeastern regions).

For some services it is possible that a critical mass can only be accomplished at a statewide level or higher. Furthermore, there are some services for which the critical mass will never be achieved because of their inherent low demand, although this does not mean that these services should not be provided by the Library Systems.

Gaps in Services and Funding

While Library Systems are achieving benefits of economies of scale and have filled gaps in services not being provided by member libraries or others, further improvements can be obtained but only through additional funding. In particular, we believe that the cost to funders of school library operations and services could be substantially reduced by having School Library Systems perform (or arrange for) these functions. School Library Systems have never been funded at a level sufficient for them to provide the services required under Law or necessary to achieve their potential. Also, there is evidence that both PLS and RRLRS could provide their services to more member libraries, thereby accomplishing further savings to funders. PLS and RRLRS have been required to cut services back in recent years because of the loss in funding level due to inflation.

Balancing Local Autonomy and Accountability

We established that a certain degree of autonomy and flexibility is necessary for Library Systems to be able to provide optimum services. However, in order to do this Systems must have appropriate and valid data about their operations and services. Average cost data and data about System performance were obtained in the study to provide rational economic evidence for future decision-making by Library Systems regarding services and service provision. Comparative data among Library Systems are provided for this purpose.

In order to earn the right to local autonomy, Library Systems must also demonstrate accountability to their members and to the State. The results of the study suggest that many Library Systems too often ignore accountability to their members and we have recommended some steps to move them in the right direction. We also believe that Library Systems in general have not been sufficiently accountable to the State. We have provided recommendations concerning measures and procedures for improving such accountability.

The Need for Continued Cooperation

Our recommendations in this document deal primarily with serious problems that were observed during the course of the study. The fact that Library Systems in the State are generally far more developed than elsewhere has influenced our recommendations. Our general approach to the study has been to identify and build upon strengths in current Systems and library resources such as collections, leadership and staff, equipment, automated systems, facilities and so on. During the study we identified well over 100 distinct services provided by the Library Systems. We investigated the importance of these services, the cost of providing them, and how well they are received by their users. From this analysis, coupled with many sound suggestions from the library community in the State, we have tried to establish and recommend a system structure which can best take advantage of and build upon the existing strengths of libraries and Library Systems. The recommended structure balances (1) the requirement for each type of Library System to provide the best services possible to its members and (2) the need to have uninhibited cooperation among various types of libraries and Library Systems. We believe that these two objectives can be best met by having each of the three types of Systems focus their efforts on the important services required by their members, and by accomplishing "multitype" cooperation among libraries through coordination among member libraries of all principal types and the three types of Library Systems. Recommendations concerning this structure were discussed in Section 1.4.

New York State is extremely rich in its information resources. Surely there are only a few countries that could match the library resources that are found in the State. However, there is abundant evidence that some changes need to be made in order to optimize service provision. Study results provide evidence that some Library Systems provide services that cost more than they should, and member libraries are not satisfied with some services. Furthermore, and perhaps much more disturbing, are serious conflicts and outright animosity among the three types of Library Systems. By their very nature, library cooperation and resource sharing will generate disagreements. However, current conflicts among Library Systems have the potential of being counter-productive and could inhibit service. When Library Systems were formed, it was necessary for many in the library community to compromise and share their wealth of resources for the good of the whole. For Library Systems in New York State to succeed in the future, the same degree of ingenuity, compromise and generosity must continue to prevail.

This study leaves little doubt about the use, usefulness and value of Library Systems in New York State. With some refocussing of priorities, flexibility to meet new challenges, the vision to recognize and seize new opportunities, and continued cooperation Library Systems can enhance their valuable service to the library community and to the changing population of New York State at least through the next decade.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING LIBRARY SYSTEM SERVICES

S1. All Library Systems should develop new plans of services every five years. It is important that the planning be more participatory than it sometimes has been in the past. The process should involve all System members. The planning process should include reassessment of mission, goals, objectives and priorities to meet changing needs. Strategies for meeting the objectives should be developed.

S2. Library Systems should re-examine their strengths and the strengths of their members to determine the best provider for each service. Unique or comprehensive resources should be offered through cooperative arrangements, perhaps under contract, to member libraries of other Systems.

S3. The protocol for interlibrary loan request processing should be as follows:

- point-to-point requesting and fulfillment should be the first choice of borrowing libraries (assuming their access to a bibliographic database online or offline),
- difficult to locate requests should be submitted by member libraries to their Library System for (1) processing, (2) verification (if needed), (3) subject search (if needed), (4) location, and (5) referral or fulfillment,
- difficult to locate requests should immediately be referred to other Systems or elsewhere according to known strengths.

S4. The protocol for interlibrary loan request fulfillment (once located) should be as follows:

- point-to-point as indicated above,
- Library System fulfillment when appropriate,
- Library Systems to libraries within system, to like-type libraries elsewhere, NYSILL or elsewhere according to known strengths.

S5. Interlibrary loan request processing for PLS should be done by Central Libraries when most cost-effective to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING LIBRARY SYSTEM SERVICES (cont.)

S6. Central Libraries generally must improve their staff capabilities for interlibrary loan processing, and reference, referral and research.

S7. Existing interlibrary loan networks and utilities such as RLIN, SUNY OCLC and DRANET should continue to be used, if they are cost effective and achieve equal or better quality and timeliness.

S8. Retrospective conversion should be done by a Library System only if the number of titles processed annually is more than the "critical mass." Otherwise arrangements should be made to contract with another Library System or vendor to do the work at a lower cost per title.

S9. Each region should have a comprehensive union list of holdings of all libraries (of all types) in the region.

S10. The union lists should be distributed online or on CD-ROM depending on the cost effectiveness in each region (dictated in part by communication costs). All Library Systems and Central Libraries should have access to appropriate systems (i.e., online or CD-ROM).

S11. Ultimately there should be a Statewide union listing of holdings which is directly accessible by all libraries through online or in-library CD-ROM. (Centralized access online will be cost-effective only when the Technology Network Ties (TNT) communication network or other state-wide network is in place.)

S12. BOCES, Big City School District and other current arrangements for delivery for SLS should continue, unless more cost-effective alternatives are identified.

S13. Local and regional delivery services within each region should be examined by libraries and Library Systems and cost-effective cooperative delivery arranged.

S14. The rotating collection services of PLS should be evaluated and a maximum allowable cost per item circulated to patrons established by DLD. (The data provided in the Library System survey should not be used because these particular data appear erratic.) The determination of cost per item circulated and maximum values should be established. Collections operating over the maximum level should be discontinued, partially weeded to reduce costs or turned over to another organization in the region.

S15. The SLS should examine the possibility of providing small rotating collections for certain courses, but only if they can be scheduled and are found to be cost-effective.

S16. PLS pool collections should be evaluated to determine the extent of use of items and their cost per loan. Maximum costs (including storage) per item loaned should be established to weed items, classes of items (by age, subject, etc.) or the entire collection.

S17. DLD should set a maximum cost per item circulated by bookmobile (i.e., 50% above median cost). PLS exceeding that amount should take steps to reduce average cost (e.g., reduce area covered, reduce number of trips, investigate needs, publicize service, etc.) or eliminate the service for an alternative or less expensive means of serving the otherwise unserved population.

S18. Central Libraries should provide reference, referral and research services for public libraries, if cost-effective to do so.

S19. Central Libraries must strengthen their staff, reference collections and reference online and CD-ROM systems to provide better services than now being provided by many of them. If there is sufficient evidence this is not done, the responsible PLS should seek alternative source(s) for the service.

S20. A referral service listing of unusual or very costly reference materials, staff subject expertise and online database (or vendor) availability should be developed within each region. The listing should be incorporated in the union list of holdings and, thus, provided by the same medium.

S21. Library Systems should provide reference, referral and research service to each of their member libraries. However, difficult searches should be referred. The decision concerning where to refer requests will be made on the basis of the union list and one's knowledge of special resources.

S22. Protocols for referral of requests for reference, referral and research services should be as follows:

- PLS member libraries. Do search themselves, refer to Central Libraries, refer to other sources according to known strengths.

- RRLRS member libraries. Do search themselves, refer to RRLRS, refer to other sources according to known streugths.

- SLS member libraries. Do search themselves, refer to SLS, refer to Central Libraries, refer to other sources according to known strengths.

S23. Direct services to users should be reviewed, particularly with regard to the cost per person served. DLD should set a maximum level, over which alternative methods of providing service should be sought.

S24. All consulting, continuing education workshops and grant support services should be reviewed every three years to determine which cooperative services should be provided and which organizations should provide the services.

S25. SLS and Central Libraries in particular should coordinate collection development of material to support curricula and reference services (for students and teachers).

S26. Library System directors and boards should compare average costs of all services against State norms (e.g., quartiles of average costs). The following criteria are unacceptable:

- over 75 percent of services have average costs above the median,
- over 25 percent of services have average costs in the high-cost quartile, or
- over 67 percent of total budget involves services with costs above the median.

If any one is not met, the Library System director must present a plan to the Board for lowering costs. Actions that might be taken by the Board include:

- modify service provision,
- assign or contract service to another organization,
- merge some services (or the Library System) with another Library System, etc.,
- replace Library System director, if evidence warrants such an action.

S27. Every service with average costs more than 50 percent above the high-cost quartile bound should be reviewed and justified or a plan set forth for lowering to at least below the high-cost quartile bound.

S28. If less than 20 percent of the total cost of a specific service provided by a Library System is provided to libraries that have fewer requests (i.e., numbers of transactions) than the "critical mass," the service should be assigned or discontinued by the Library System. An equivalent amount of services should be provided to member libraries, or the

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING LIBRARY SYSTEM SERVICES (cont.)

service to small libraries can be contracted elsewhere, or the Library System should provide a "grant" to member libraries to provide the service themselves.

S29. Basic Library System services should be designated by DLD. These services should be those that show a clear evidence of economies of scale, other favorable cost effectiveness or that must be provided because no other satisfactory alternative sources are available.

S30. DLD should initiate a project to design a common statistical recordkeeping system which (like the common command set) could be used as a base set by all Library Systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING STRUCTURE AND INTERSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS

ST1. There should be three types of Library Systems:

- Public Library Systems (PLS) serving public libraries
- Reference and Research Library Resources Systems (RRLRS) serving academic, research and special libraries.
- School Library Systems (SLS) serving school libraries

ST2. Libraries should be members of only their own primary type of Library System. Membership in a Library System should be based on minimum requirements set forth by DLD. Member libraries may receive services directly through Library Systems (of any type) to which they do not belong. However, initial arrangements (or contracts) for such services must be coordinated with their primary Library System. A library should not use a service from another library or Library System, if the member library's own primary Library System routinely provides the service.

ST3. Laws and regulations governing Library Systems should be flexible enough to recognize and accommodate appropriate service configuration, resources and other differences among Systems.

ST4. Library Systems should provide their members with access to the most cost-effective services possible, by either acting as service providers or by arranging or contracting with other providers as appropriate.

ST5. Coordination of services and cooperation among types of Library Systems and their members should take place through Intersystem Cooperative Networks (ICONs) consisting of representatives of member libraries and Library Systems from each of the three types of Library Systems in each region.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING STRUCTURE AND INTERSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS (cont.)

The ICONs should elect a Coordinating Agent every three years. The Coordinating Agent will be responsible for coordinating the development of a three-year cooperative service plan and administering cooperative programs and services.

ST6. Union list production should be done by an organization(s) determined by the Intersystem Cooperative Network (ICON).

ST7. A region-wide referral service listing should be prepared by an organization determined by the Intersystem Cooperative Network (ICON).

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING GOVERNANCE OF LIBRARY SYSTEMS

G1 Member library directors should be allowed to serve on Library System Boards. Boards should also include lay persons. Persons with special expertise such as finance, law, etc. should be sought to serve in addition to member library directors, patrons, and library trustees.

G2 Members of Library System Boards/Councils should be trained to understand economic issues and statistical methods concerning Library System operations and services.

G3 The Library System director should be an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the Board.

G4 Each Library System should have a Directors' Advisory Council which includes the directors of each member library.

G5 SLS should remain within BOCES and Big City School Districts. The Law should specify that there is a special relationship between SLS and BOCES.

G6 DLD, Bureau of School Library Media Programs (BSLMP) and SLS should provide guidance to BOCES and Big City School District administrators and boards to develop a clearer understanding of the BOCES and SLS relationship and the role of SLS in the education process.

G7 SLS should be given fiscal responsibility for their budgets. SLS funds should be dedicated for school library services.

G8 SLS staff should not be required to do BOCES related work except under contract to be approved by DLD.

G9 Interlibrary loan request processing and reference, referral and research services provided to public libraries and their patrons should be the responsibility of Public Library Systems. PLS should arrange with Central Libraries to provide these services, if cost effective to do so. Central Library directors should report to PLS directors regarding provision of these services.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING GOVERNANCE OF LIBRARY SYSTEMS (cont.)

G10 Representation in Intersystem Cooperative Networks (ICON) should consist of at least one Library System director and one member library director from each type of Library System.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING FUNDING

F1 Library Systems should continually explore the most cost effective mechanisms to provide services themselves or through other means.

F2 The DLD and BSLMP should determine which school library functions can be performed less expensively by (or through) SLS. This should be done with a pilot test of one or more SLS. Furthermore, SLS should actively promote these services and seek ways of providing them through State Aid funds.

F3 All State and Federal funds should be made available to the Systems in a timely manner; no System should have to secure a loan to cover payroll and other expenses.

F4 Basic Library System services (i.e., ILL and reference request processing, services in which economies of scale are clearly achieved, and services which cannot be done by member libraries) should have inflation factors built into budgets.

F5 Categorical funding should continue to be made available for special programs designed to fill service gaps identified by the Library Systems or the State. However, such funds should not substitute for or de-emphasize funds received for basic services.

F6 DLD should examine funding formulas to establish funding factors more clearly related to actual costs of services. This can be done if Library Systems provide cost and quantity data by service.

F7 The responsibility of determining how funds for any program should be disbursed among Library Systems should not be given to any one Library System. Rather, the division of funds should be made on the basis of pre-determined formulas, or should be determined by New York State.

F8 Some services should be provided to all member libraries without charge. Such services are those which do not substitute for the services that might be done in-house by a library. Examples include interlibrary borrowing, referral, continuing education, etc.

F9 Operational services to libraries that are part of for-profit organizations (e.g., company libraries) should be provided for a fee equal to cost.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING FUNDING: (cont.)

F10 Central Libraries should be funded by PLS for Library System services provided by CL at a level that covers all direct costs. Acquisitions and physical processing of materials purchased through Central Book Aid should be done by PLS at no charge to the Central Libraries.

F11 Coordinating Agents should be given a specified amount/grant for developing three year plans and administering Intersystem Cooperative Network (ICON) programs.

F12 DLD should be funded at a sufficient level to provide more direct services to Library Systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MEASUREMENT

M1 Uniform accounting procedures for reporting State, Federal, and other sources of funds should be designed. These procedures should match local accounting requirements as much as possible.

M2 All Library Systems should maintain input cost and output data (quantities, quality, timeliness, etc.) for each service provided, regardless of how the service is provided.

M3 Library Systems (i.e., management and Boards or Councils) should every two years review average costs of services against State norms (i.e., quartiles) to determine whether corrective action is necessary. Results should be reported to DLD.

M4 Library Systems should conduct a survey of members every two years to determine satisfaction with timeliness and quality of each System service received. A uniform survey instrument should be designed for each service (with provision for additional questions, if necessary). Library Systems (i.e., management and Boards or Councils) should review satisfaction against State norms (i.e., quartiles of average satisfaction) to determine evidence as to whether corrective action is necessary. Results should be reported to DLD.

M5 Central Libraries should report input and output statistics annually to the responsible PLS director, who in turn, will report appropriate data to DLD.

M6 Financial and statistical reports required by DLD should ask only for data that are needed and used. DLD should review data collection requirements and make them compatible among types of Library Systems.

M7 Published statistical reports should include a thorough analysis, (e.g., trend analysis) and should be published and distributed in a timely manner. Average cost data and average satisfaction ratings should be provided by quartiles for use by Library Systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MEASUREMENT (CONT.)

M8 A listing of Library System and Central Library requirements given in laws and regulations should be prepared by DLD and the Library Systems should be required annually or every two years to demonstrate that they meet the requirements and how they met them.

M9 DLD should designate one person as statistical or data analyst to oversee data collection, analysis and presentation.

M10 Library Systems should implement spreadsheet and/or other database management programs and develop both input cost and output quantity measures for every service provided.

M11 DLD should develop regulations and guidelines within which individual Library Systems, their Boards and member libraries can determine which services are necessary and how these services can best be provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING STATE-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITY

SL1 The State responsibility for Library Systems should remain with SED and DLD.

SL2 The DLD and BSLMP of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education should continue their intradepartmental cooperative program for supporting School Library Systems.

SL3 Renewed effort should be made to educate SED, legislators, school administrators and faculty, and the non-school library community on the importance of libraries to lifelong learning in school settings, academic institutions, communities and work places.

SL4 The DLD and library community should present the Regents and State Legislature with periodic evidence of savings achieved by Library Systems, that there are not better alternatives and that necessary gaps in services are being filled by them.

SL5 A goal and recurring theme of those who support Library Systems should be the enhancement of access to all publicly owned collections by all citizens, and to private collections when arrangements can be equitably made.

SL6 Regional Consultants should spend more time on site in the regions and there needs to be more time available for consulting.

SL7 DLD should consider having a unit designated as a Library Systems unit or office in order to ensure proper accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING STATE-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITY (cont.)

SL8 The DLD should exert more control in ensuring that Laws and Regulations are fully implemented.

SL9 DLD should develop standards for Library System performance in the next two years.

SL10 There should be more technical assistance, interaction, facilitation, leadership and guidance from DLD. This will facilitate establishing accountability of Library Systems.

SL11 DLD should streamline and automate paperwork.

SL12 DLD should develop productivity and performance measures for itself.

SL13 DLD should budget and be funded for achieving recommended State-level responsibilities.

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